



Short report

An analysis of drug-related offenses in Japan: Focusing on a discussion of future preventive measures

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 8 February 2010

Accepted 15 June 2011

Available online 14 July 2011

Keywords:

Cannabis

Stimulants

Drug

Organization

Prevention

ABSTRACT

Recently, drug use has become a major social problem in Japan. Therefore, this study examined recent trends of drug use in detail. Specifically, this report researched the number of people arrested for drug-related offenses in the 8 years since 2001 and it discusses measures to prevent drug use.

During the period studied, the proportion of drug-related offenses related to 'stimulants' has decreased, despite those drugs accounting for the highest proportion of such offenses, and the proportion of offenses related to 'cannabis' has increased markedly. Therefore, organizations implementing measures to prevent drug-related offenses should be aware of the recent increase in the number of people arrested for 'cannabis' and the high proportion of arrests for 'stimulants'.

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1. Introduction

In Japan, numerous incidents involving the use of cannabis made the news in 2008, and use of this drug has become a major social problem. There are reports^{1–7} on drug-related issues around the world in various fields. Some reports^{8,9} describe drug-related issues in Japan, and help for families with family members that have drug-related problems has also been reported.¹⁰ A report¹¹ has shown that many families with a family member who is drug-dependent hope that treatment encouraging a return to society for the drug-dependent family member will be offered. The National Police Agency¹² has implemented measures to prevent drug abuse. Recent trends of drug use should be examined in detail so that measures to prevent drug-related issues can be implemented. Therefore, the current study researched the number of people arrested for drug-related offenses in Japan.

2. Materials and methods

This research studied the number of people arrested for drug-related offenses in 2001–2008 as reported by the National Police Agency (Figs. 1–3). Drugs are classified as 'stimulants',

'cannabis', 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs', or 'opium'. Preventive measures based on results of this research are also discussed.

3. Results and discussion

During the period studied, the total number of people arrested for drug-related offenses annually ranged from

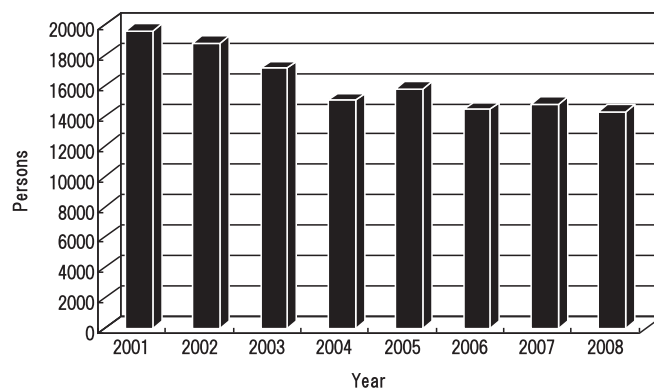


Fig. 1. Total number of people arrested for drug-related offenses annually in 2001–2008.

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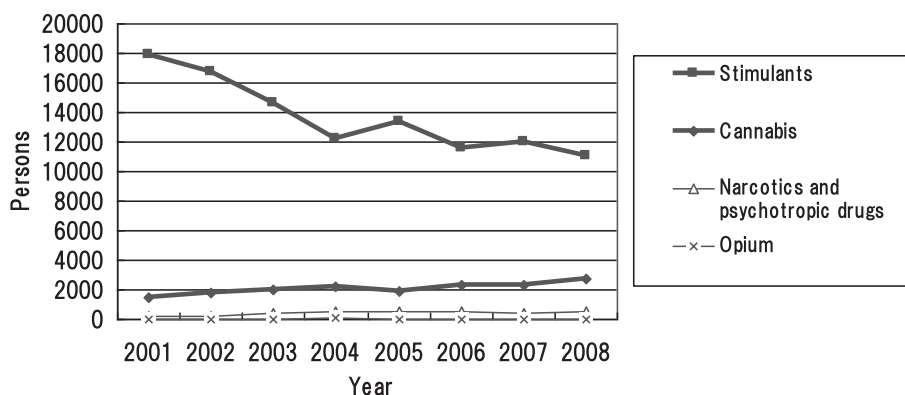


Fig. 2. The number of people arrested annually for 'stimulants', 'cannabis', 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs', or 'opium' in 2001–2008.

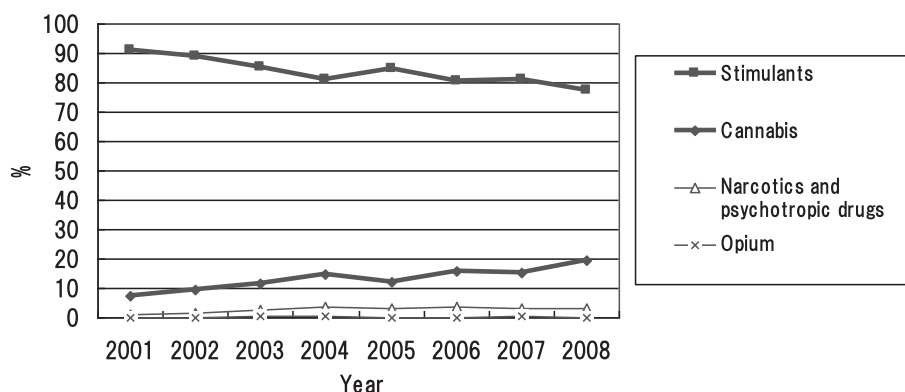


Fig. 3. Proportion of people arrested annually for 'stimulants', 'cannabis', 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs', or 'opium' in 2001–2008.

a maximum of 19,647 in 2001 to a minimum of 14,288 in 2008 (Fig. 1). The number of people arrested varied from a maximum of 17,912 in 2001 to a minimum of 11,025 in 2008 for 'stimulants', from a minimum of 1450 in 2001 to a maximum of 2758 in 2008 for 'cannabis', from a minimum of 241 in 2001 to a maximum of 560 in 2004 for 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs', and from a maximum of 59 in 2004 to a minimum of 12 in 2005 for 'opium' (Fig. 2).

The proportion of people arrested for drug-related offenses by type of drug indicated that 'stimulants' accounted for 91.2% of such offenses in 2001, 89.1% in 2002, 81.2% in 2007, and 77.2% in 2008; 'cannabis' accounted for 7.4% of such offenses in 2001, 9.3% in 2002, 15.4% in 2007, and 19.3% in 2008 (Fig. 3). Other proportions were explained by 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs' and 'opium' (Fig. 3).

In spite of accounting for the highest proportion of drug-related offenses, the proportion of offenses related to 'stimulants' has decreased. In contrast, the proportions of offenses related to 'cannabis' and 'narcotics and psychotropic drugs' has increased, which is especially true for 'cannabis'.

At present, measures to prevent drug-related offenses in Japan often take the form of posters, campaigns, and public addresses on the prevention of drug abuse or educational seminars on the prevention of drug abuse. There is a report on the difficulty of implementing preventive measures with only the involvement of individual organizations in relevant fields, such as the courts, the police, the educational system, welfare organizations, and the medical establishment, in drug-related problems.¹³ The report¹³ indicates that public health nurses need to have experience and sensitivity to drug-related problems in order to fulfill their roles in

drug-related services at health centers. A report¹⁴ indicates that public health centers should consider measures to prevent drug-related problems. A report¹⁵ described how the individuals who provide drug prevention education acquire their knowledge of drugs and indicated that this knowledge should be shared with others.

Organizations involved in measures to prevent drug-related offenses should be aware of the recent increase in the number of people arrested for 'cannabis' and the high proportion of arrests for 'stimulants'.

Relevant organizations should work together to implement measures to prevent drug-related offenses.

Ethical approval

This report discussed only numerical data without individual 2 information.

Funding

None.

Conflict of interest

None.

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